

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
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History 573

POWER AND PATRIARCHY IN MEXICAN HISTORY

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5105 Humanities
263-1841/3-1800

Course Description

This seminar is an intensive reading and discussion course on the significance of patriarchy and gender relations for understanding the organization and uses of power in Mexican history. Our purpose is to discuss, debate, and otherwise come to grips with the basic feminist argument that the analysis of gender and patriarchal power transforms the interpretation of society as a whole. This we attempt to do over a long sweep of time, from the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán to women workers in Mexico City in the 1980s. Our method will be to discuss intensively and systematically a large body of books and articles. Because our purposes are broad, and because discussion of the particular is sometimes helped by theory and comparison, we will on occasion read about other societies and about theory.

This is your seminar. In a discussion course, all the participants take on an especially active responsibility for the success of the course. I expect all students to participate actively and thoughtfully in seminar discussion, and to master the art of combining sharp debate on points of disagreement with a collegial atmosphere encouraging us all to learn from one another and to develop lines of analysis as a group.

Course assignments and grading are discussed after the schedule listed below.

Schedule

1. Jan. 18. Martin Luther King Day. No meeting.
2. Jan. 25. Introductory session.
Students should be well into the reading for next week's discussion.
3. Feb. 1. The Challenge of Feminist Theory and History.
Reading: Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy (New York, 1986).
4. Feb. 8. Gender, the Cult of Courage, and Aztec Imperialism.
Reading: Frances F. Berdan, The Aztecs of Central Mexico: An Imperial Society (New York, 1982).

June Nash, "Aztec Women: The Transition from Status to Class in Empire and Colony," in Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives (New York, 1980), 134-148.

Inga Clendinnen, "The Cost of Courage in Aztec Society," Past and Present, 107 (1985), 44-89.

5. Feb. 15. Women and the Indian Community Under Spanish Colonial Rule.

Reading: William B. Taylor, Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages (Stanford, 1979).

Temma Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918," Signs, 7:3 (Spring, 1982), 545-566.

Supplem: Eric R. Wolf, Sons of the Shaking Earth (Chicago, 1959).

6. Feb. 22. The Agony of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Reading: Margaret Sayers Peden, ed. and trans., A Woman of Genius: The Intellectual Autobiography of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Salisbury, Ct., 1982).

Irving Leonard, Baroque Times in Old Mexico (Ann Arbor, 1959), 172-192.

7. Feb. 29. Honor, Marriage, and the Elite.

Reading: Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "Honor Ideology, Marriage Negotiation, and Class-Gender Domination in New Mexico, 1690-1846," Latin American Perspectives, 44 (Winter, 1985), 81-104.

John Tutino. "Power, Class, and Family: Men and Women in the Mexican Elite, 1750-1810," The Americas, 39:3 (Jan., 1983), 359-381.

Asunción Lavrin and Edith Couturier, "Dowries and Wills: A View of Women's Socioeconomic Role in Colonial Guadalajara and Puebla, 1640-1790," Hispanic American Historical Review, 59:2 (May, 1979), 280-304.

Supplem. on 19th century transitions:

Silvia Marina Arrom, The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857 (Stanford, 1985).

John Tutino, "Family Economies in Agrarian Mexico, 1750-1910," Journal of Family History, 10:3 (Fall, 1985), 258-271.

8. March 7. Background: The Changing Agrarian Scene, the Revolution, and the Birth of Modern Mexico.

Reading: Eric R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century (New York, 1969), 3-48.

Friedrich Katz, "Mexico: Restored Republic and Porfiriato, 1867-1910," in Leslie Bethell, ed., The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol. V (New York, 1986), 3-78.

8. March 7 (continued).

Friedrich Katz, "Peasants in the Mexican Revolution of 1910," in J. Spielberg and S. Whiteford, eds., Forging Nations: A Comparative View of Rural Ferment and Revolt (Lansing, 1976), 61-85.

Ronald Waterbury, "Non-revolutionary Peasants: Oaxaca Compared to Morelos in the Mexican Revolution," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17:4 (1975), 410-442.

Peter H. Smith, Labyrinths of Power: Political Recruitment in Twentieth-Century Mexico (Princeton, 1979), 28-62.

Supplem: Roger D. Hansen, The Politics of Mexican Development (Baltimore, 1971).

Anna Macias, Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico (Westport, Ct., 1982).

9. March 21. The Revolution and the Cult of Male Heroes.

Reading: Ilene V. O'Malley, The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940 (Westport, Ct., 1986).

Supplem: Mariano Azuela, The Underdogs (orig. 1915; New York, 1962).

John Reed, Insurgent Mexico (orig. 1914; New York, 1969).

10. March 28. Gender in Family and Life Histories.

Reading: Oscar Lewis, Five Families (New York, 1959).

11. April 4. Morality and Patriarchy in Modern Village Life.

Reading: Lola Romanucci-Ross, Conflict, Violence, and Morality in a Mexican Village (rev. ed., Chicago, 1986).

Eva Hunt, Review of Conflict, Violence, and Morality..., in American Anthropologist, 77:4 (Dec., 1975), 946-948.

Supplem: Oscar Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied (Urbana, 1951).

12. April 11. Women and Industrial Labor (Part I).

Reading: María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier (Albany, 1983).

Oscar J. Martínez, "Soledad Fuente," in William H. Beezley and Judith Ewell, eds., The Human Tradition in Latin America: The Twentieth Century (Wilmington, DE, 1987), 195-206.

Course Assignments and Grading

The most important assignment of this seminar is active, thoughtful, and bold oral participation on a week-to-week basis. Read the material, think about the issues it poses, come ready to articulate and defend your thoughts, dare to disagree with peers and so-called experts.

In addition to week-to-week participation, each seminar member will have special participation roles on one of the seven "work teams" we will establish at the start of the semester. Each work team (2-3 individuals) will undertake two tasks: 1) writing a joint report, described below, on supplementary readings; and 2) serving the role of leader/facilitator during the first hour of one week's session. The joint report on supplementary readings will be due at 2 pm in 3211 Humanities on the Friday preceding the pertinent Monday seminar. The report shall be 2-3 pages in length, and will present a paragraph on each of the following topics: a summary of the supplementary book's principal findings and argument; your reaction to the book's findings and argument; the implications of the supplementary reading for the core readings and issues assigned to the whole seminar; the single most important issue raised by the supplementary reading for class discussion on the core readings and issues. In the leader/facilitator role, work teams will provide a list of 2-3 discussion issues by Friday 2 pm for the subsequent Monday seminar, and will lead discussion in the first hour of the seminar.

Aside from the joint reports of work teams, each seminar member will fulfill the following writing assignments:

- 1) a short paper (4-5 pages) presenting a critical review and analysis of the assigned readings of a given week, due at the start of the pertinent seminar session;
- 2) a journal-essay. Each member of the seminar will keep a weekly journal recording her or his reflections on and reactions to the readings on a single page. Pages from the journal should be submitted to me at the beginning of class on a week-to-week basis as the semester proceeds. At the end of the semester, students will write a short-to-medium essay (6-9 pages) analyzing their intellectual evolution during the course of the semester, and presenting their conclusions about power and patriarchy in Mexican history. The completed journal and essay are due by Friday, May 2.

Grading will be weighted roughly as follows:

week-to-week participation--one third; work team participation--one sixth; short critical essay--one sixth; journal-essay--one third.

History 573, Power and Patriarchy in Mexican History, page 4.

12. April 11 (continued).

Supplem: Vicki L. Ruiz, Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950 (Albuquerque, 1987).

13. April 18. Women and Industrial Labor (Part II)

Reading: Lourdes Benería and Martha Roldán, The Crossroads of Class & Gender: Industrial Homework, Subcontracting, and Household Dynamics in Mexico City (Chicago, 1987).

14. April 25. Comparative Perspectives: Gender and the Problem of Colonialism.

Reading: Irene Silverblatt, Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru (Princeton, 1987).

15. May 2. Comparative Perspectives: Gender, Class, and Peasantry in Modern Settings.

Reading: Susan C. Bourque and Kay Barbara Warren, Women of the Andes: Patriarchy and Social Change in Two Peruvian Towns (Ann Arbor, 1981).

Florencia E. Mallon, "Patriarchy in the Transition to Capitalism: Central Peru, 1830-1950," Feminist Studies, 13:2 (Summer, 1987), 379-407.